

# Navigating School Transitions



**Change can be a daunting experience. It is common to want our lives to feel predictable and certain - having a degree of control makes us feel comfortable and secure.**

As we navigate changes in life, our rational thoughts can often reason change to be beneficial, necessary, or welcomed. However, rational thoughts cannot always prevent fear, challenging emotions, and anxiety from surfacing. For children who are still in the developmental stages of growth, it can be difficult to access their rational thoughts.

Children who have been adopted and have experienced early disrupted attachments may have predispositions or sensitivities to change. The adoption experience may mean predictability and control are important to the child. Children will experience numerous changes in their life which require them to adapt. A common change children experience is during their schooling transitions.



# Tips for supporting children in the lead-up to change

- **Be clear with your child about the change** – What, when, where, why and how it will happen.
- **Involve your child in the process** – Give as much information as possible about the change. Show photos of the new school, visit the school, meet the teacher, choose schoolbooks.
- **Normalise emotional responses to the change** – Make your child feel comfortable to express their emotions and worries about change, without minimising them.
- **Collaborate with your child about what you can do to best support them** – Make time to listen to what they need during this time. It might be a daily walk around the block or a creative activity you can do together.
  - **Give your child your uninterrupted time and curious attention.**
- **Learn about the Window of Tolerance** – Children don't always verbally articulate their fears, but you may recognise a shift in their behaviours and responses. See information sheet on Window of Tolerance to learn about regulating the nervous system.



## Communicating with your child's new teacher

Making time to speak with your child's new teacher is a helpful way to ensure your child has a support network through the change they are experiencing. Communicating to their teacher about the change can help them be supportive too.

